

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 21, 2012**

Members Present: Thompson, Lardizzzone, Carroll, Goss, Harden, Keithley, Lank, Newstadt, Newman, and Weir

Members Excused: Corsa, Evans, Sarg and Wasson

Staff Present: Davila, Peterson and Vitacco

Introduction of Guest(s): Daniel Hendee (VAMC Director), Mike Rybicki (VAMC), Bill McMullen (AF Sergeants Association), Jerry Stauffer and Myron Smith (DELVETS), Linda Boone (Home of the Brave), Elizabeth Byers Jiron (Stand Down), Jack Tillmon (The Alliance of Disabled Veterans) and Michelle Lee (Community Blue Print)

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nation's Flag.

Chairman opened the meeting by thanking everyone for their confidence in him for the last two years and mentioned that the elections will take place next month.

Mr. Hendee introduced himself and provided a brief professional synopsis and introduced Mr. Rybicki. There were questions and discussion about filling medical positions in Sussex County, DE.

Mr. McMullen reported that they had a very successful Airmen's Conference in Jacksonville, FL, from August 11-16, 2012. The Air Force Chief of Staff spoke at the Conference. DAFB will have a Change of Command Ceremony on August 27, 2012. September 7, 2012, will be the 65th Anniversary of the Air Force and there will be a Ball held at Dover Downs. The First Sergeants and APSA will be heading up to Gettysburg on September 14, 2012, to clean up the battlefield; as is done twice a year. September 21, 2012, is POW/MIA Day with numerous activities planned at DAFB.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Stauffer announced that they have a lot of activities going on at Post 1 between now and December and provided a handout of the events. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with current TARGET policies in reference to how they treat veterans, military and military spouses.

Ms. Boone spoke about the property for the new women's shelter, items they need and announced they are planning a yard sale during Labor Day weekend. She also reported that the Governor came to the Home of the Brave and signed into law HB 350 (providing a tax deductible check off on Delaware State taxes). She wanted to thank Commissioner Lank's grandson, Tyler Winchell, who did some fundraising and made a financial donation to the Home of the Brave. She spoke more about the Home of the Brave and the new women's shelter and answered questions.

Mrs. Byers Jiron spoke about the 2012 Stand Down that is scheduled for October 5, 2012, at the American Legion Post 2 in Dover, DE.

Mr. Tillmon spoke about his organization's mission.

Ms. Lee thanked the Commission for allowing her to use office space here in Dover, DE.

Mr. Peterson provided an annual and current update for the Delaware Veterans Home; which included handouts and spoke about upcoming events. He introduced Ms. Vitacco, the new Registered Nurse Assessments Coordinator; handling admissions.

Ms. Vitacco provided a brief personal and professional synopsis, spoke about the current status of waiting veterans and answered questions.

MOTION BY HARDEN TO ACCEPT JULY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY LANK, MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PERSONNEL

Mr. Davila indicated that there was still one casual seasonal position that needs to be filled at the Northern Cemetery.

NORTHERN CEMETERY

Commissioner Harden reported that the first part of the paving project has been completed and the scattering of ashes garden plaque has been received. The construction meeting for the raising and realignment of the markers is scheduled for September 4, 2012, and the check presentation for this project is scheduled for October 10, 2012.

A Cemetery overview presentation was shown.

Mr. Davila spoke about future changes to the Commission website and both Cemeteries.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Vice Chairman Lardizzone reported that he attended the Bill signings at the Home of the Brave (Income tax check off) and the Chase Center (Veterans' Opportunity Credit). He plans to schedule a visit with Representative Jaques in January and revisit issues still pending.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Commissioner Weir spoke about a veteran's poll and his visit to Missouri.

Mr. Davila reported that letters were sent to the superintendents in the State of Delaware notifying them of the Commission's Speakers Program and spoke about the veterans' history projects.

BY-LAWS

Commissioner Lank will review Senate Bill 270 and hold a committee meeting following the Commission meeting. They will also review the Commission Operating Instructions.

COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS

Commissioner Lank reported that MOPH will host Veterans Day at the Bridge; which will be held on Sunday, November 11, 2012.

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS

Carroll (MOPH) – One of their local members was elected as the National Junior Vice Commander. Chapter 1787 held a picnic at Trap Pond. He also attended the signing of House Bill 275.

Goss (KWVA) – On September 15, 2012, they will hold their Department picnic in Harrington at the American Legion and everyone is welcome to come. Their Department meeting will be held on September 20, 2012, 10:00 am, at the American Legion in Dover.

Harden (WAVES) – Their next meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2012, at which time they will take in a new member.

Keithley (40 & 8) – They lost a member in New Jersey and he spoke about the memorial.

Lank (MOWW) – Their Chapter meetings will start again in September, but they did have a staff meeting this past week and he spoke about one of their members.

Lardizzone (DAV) – He attended their National Convention in Las Vegas, NV, from August 2-8, 2012, and their guest speaker was the Vice President of the United States. While he was there, he had lunch with Mr. Chuck Dorman. He spoke about their outreach van and mentioned their first Department meeting will be held on September 5, 2012.

Newman (VFW) – He just returned from their National Convention in Reno, NV, and provided an update about the VFW Service Officers. Their first Council of Administration meeting will be held on September 10, 2012, at Legislative Hall.

Newstadt (JWV) – He was invited to General Broomall's retirement and the JWV will be having a meeting this weekend. He indicated that the headquarters for the Heritage Museum is being moved from Wilmington to a refurbished house in Delaware City.

Weir (AMVETS) – He spoke about a change in their organizational meetings.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Commissioner Carroll reported that he and Commission Harden attended a focus group meeting at the VA. He spoke about the meeting and expressed that he thought it was very informative. He also mentioned receiving a challenge coin from the Commission.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 18, 2012 (10:00 AM)

**LOCATION: Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100
Dover, DE**

ADJOURNED